

Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau  
Advisory Committee Meeting  
1625 North Market Blvd., 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Ste. N-220  
Sacramento, CA 95834

July 14, 2006  
Meeting Minutes

**Agenda Item I-Call to Order and Roll Call**

Ms. Johnson-Wright called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Roll call was taken and a quorum was not present.

Members Present:

Ms. Marva Johnson-Wright, Chairperson  
Ms. Juanita Sendjas-Lopez  
Mr. Robert Gnam

Staff Present:

Ms. Tonya Blood, Bureau Chief  
Ms. Norine Marks, Bureau Legal Counsel  
Ms. Yvonne Crawford, Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau  
Ms. Debbie Newcomer, Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau

**Agenda Item II-Approval of April 7, 2006 Minutes**

Ms. Johnson-Wright motioned to approve the April 7, 2006 minutes, and Mr. Gnam seconded the motion. They were approved as written.

**Agenda Item III-Chairperson's Report**

Ms. Johnson-Wright reported that the newly formed Subcommittee on the Strategic Plan hasn't met due to the focus of the Sunset Review Report. She reported that while we don't have a quorum today, we could still discuss agenda items as an Advisory Committee and take recommendations.

**Agenda Item IV-Bureau Chief's Update**

Ms. Blood introduced the bureau's new staff member Debbie Newcomer, and explained the functions that she will be providing for the bureau. Also, the team is examining the restructuring of duties within the bureau.

Ms. Blood explained the July 1, 2006, funding for the ATS project and I-licensing. This project will allow licensees to do credit card transactions for renewals, and some licensing/applications. It is expected that the I-licensing will be fully functional by FY 2008/09.

The Occupational Analysis (OA) is in the process of being done presently, with mailing of questionnaires to all licensees within the next two weeks. It was explained that more examiners are needed and that a recruitment letter is being sent with the questionnaire to solicit more examiners to help us with the practical exam.

Ms. Johnson-Wright suggested that those present let their fellow association members know about the survey and let them know its importance to the bureau since it's only done every five to seven years, and how critical it is to the licensing program of Hearing Aid Dispensers.

### **Agenda Item V-Consumer Outreach Consumer Brochure Final Review**

Two versions of the consumer brochure were included within the agenda packet: a long version and a shorter version. Comments included that we should ensure that all critical components are covered. Is it too much information for consumer? Does it become less cumbersome for consumer?

Ms. Sendjas-Lopez said it contains a lot of information, which is often not read. She suggested we get a condensed pocket version that would be more practical and could be copied easily.

It was mentioned that a lot of older consumers have vision problems as well as hearing, and that a smaller version might be difficult for the consumer to use (if condensed to pocket version).

The Advisory Committee reviewed the smaller brochure, and several wording changes were suggested, as were size of lettering, and the possibility of a tear off portion with vital phone numbers and important information that might be needed.

Concerns were raised by the Advisory Committee about the Mail Order/Internet Purchases portion of the brochure, and we (bureau) don't have the ability to regulate across state lines and consumers can't get fitted properly if a hearing aid is purchased on line. It was

suggested that due to the Internet being so accessible to so many people, that the brochure serves as a Consumer protection, or warning to them, of what could happen if they buy a hearing aid on line.

A member of the public in attendance suggested that parts of this section be removed. After discussion, final consensus indicated that this is a consumer brochure and that the purpose of the brochure is for information, and to warn of possible risks involved if consumers do not get hearing aids from a California Licensed Hearing Aid Dispenser. It was recommended that the section remain.

It was decided that a "Consumer Beware" possibly in red should be placed below the Mail Order/Internet Purchases.

Ms. Marks stated that the brochure must be consistent with Section 3351.5. It was also questioned that before the consumer purchases a hearing aid through direct sale, catalog, or Internet, the person selling it has to have a statement that the consumer has seen an audiologist, HAD, or physician, licensed within the state.

Cindy Peffers of HHP, mentioned that the color of the brochure is not appropriate if you are color blind, and that the bright ink on dark color is difficult for an older person to read. Suggestions were also made that the website and a phone number should be noted on the front of the brochure, to be helpful for consumers.

Questions were also raised about the a 30-day trial period mentioned within the brochure and that the Song-Beverly Consumer Warranty Act, seem to differ, as one states no charge to consumer and the other suggests that they could pay a "rental fee." It was decided that the trial period section be removed from the brochure.

Robert Ivory of CAA, questioned the "adjustment" period extending the 30-day warranty for each adjustment. Ms. Johnson-Wright expressed concerns over the Song Beverly Act and possible changes. Gary Cooper of HHP, explained the foundation of Song-Beverly and the political aspects involved with changing wording regarding adjustments, and the difficulty involved.

It was estimated that it would take about 120 days to have final print of the brochure. The brochure will also be available on the website.

### **Agenda Item VI-Regulations- Review of Draft Continuing Education Regulations**

Ms. Blood explained why changes were noted in the CE draft. Trisha Hunter of HHP, mentioned several course areas not currently within the scope of practice and suggested their consideration for future CE approval. Discussion was held concerning acceptable/unacceptable classes and what falls within the scope of practice. Ms. Marks explained how some courses might be helpful for dispenser knowledge in fitting of hearing aids, but it is difficult to look at the full range of what's within the scope to know parameters. Cindy Peffers said while some classes are outside of scope of HADB, the knowledge would be helpful for a dispenser to have. It was acknowledged that further discussion was needed but could be done during the regulatory process.

Trisha Hunter mentioned that the Nursing Board requires fewer hours than the HADB does for CE. She also mentioned that interpretation of one hour of course work is only 50 minutes of course time (contact hour) with a 10 minute break. This is the standard timing method for Colleges.

### **Agenda Item VII-Examination Updates**

Ms. Crawford went over the written and practical exam 2005/06 results. Ms. Blood stated we met with OER and that they are reviewing the amount of time required for testing at the practical exam. Due to the length of time involved we can only test 40+ people, and OER will be looking at possibly incorporating part of practical into the written exam, to shorten and refine it. Questions were raised over why practical testing seemed longer, Ms. Crawford stated that orientation is somewhat longer for examiners, lack of test subjects, and exam rooms are limited within sites we are using, and the time in Station A has increased.

## **Agenda Item VIII-Review of Sunset Review Report**

Some wording changes were made to the Sunset Review report. It was also noted that several issues were last addressed eight years ago and that terms and/or groups might not be in existence any longer.

The education requirement/externship program was discussed. Discussion on the time limit for training of someone applying to be a hearing aid dispenser, is 1,000 hours enough/too many, and what difference would an Audiologist be required to complete? In March 2006, at the Subcommittee meeting, the time was also addressed. Mr. Gnam discussed issues addressed at the March 2006, subcommittee meeting, and explained that the 1,000 hrs is equal to six months of training.

It was mentioned by Ms. Peffers that training is sometimes inconsistent in audiology programs throughout the state and nation, and blanket statements might not fully address needs. Diagnostic verses amplification depends on schooling. Questions were raised regarding scope of practice, fitting and training, hearing aid dispensers verses audiologists and education/training.

Mr. Ivory stated that you cannot sell a hearing aid to a child without an audiologist involved with the fitting. He also says that this discussion regarding training, should be discussed by the committee and they should be presenting a proposal for review. It was thought that there are about 25-40 audiology programs nationwide.

Ms. Blood discussed the National exam verses conducting our own exam. Ms. Blood presented the findings regarding the cost and the statistics, and mentioned that you don't specify on the exam that you are an audiologist when taking the practical, therefore, it would be difficult to obtain percentages.

Discussion and questions arose on if someone failed the exam what should criteria be for continuing to practice as trainee. Currently 100% supervision is needed. Clinical experience verses written exam questions, a difference between universities, and minimum hours were questioned. Possible standard needed? What kind of training is needed and should there be any requirement of supervised hours?

Ms. Marks questioned contact hours or course hours and looking at standards available to develop some parameters and possibly recommend to the bureau a possible change. Two separate issues arose. What do we say to the Legislature, and what do we want the Committee to do about making recommendations to the bureau with respect to a training program, verses education program? Should the subcommittee look into that? At the previous subcommittee meeting, an Audiologist was not in attendance, so Robert Ivory stated that their concerns were not addressed at the last subcommittee meeting. Ms. Johnson-Wright suggested another meeting with an Audiologist in attendance, which was set for August 25, 2006.

Ms. Marks suggested future agenda items such as, having the subcommittee answer questions or filling in what's needed as far as answers to training, hours, qualifications.

Ms. Sendjas-Lopez asked about the question regarding the community college courses, and the need to address it. The subject of classes through Community Colleges was mentioned, and it was stated that there are currently no college classes that are in existence to provide training for hearing aid dispensers. There is not a big enough demand, since there is no higher educational requirement to be a dispenser. Questions were raised on whether there should be more than a 12<sup>th</sup> grade education required in the future?

Gary Cooper said this question was asked eight years ago, and that no community college in eight years has been interested in doing a class.

Ms. Johnson-Wright stated that there was a program offered in the early 1990s, at Cerritos College (Britt Rivers) but it has not been in existence for several years as no one was passing the class. That is where the 1,000 hours came from, she thought. She suggested some questions for the subcommittee regarding protecting consumers through hours and training.

Ms. Blood felt she could respond in a "general sense" regarding the education requirement question of Sunset. The work of the subcommittee would help define some education requirements as well.

Ms. Hunter mentioned that the Advisory Committee is now meeting more frequently than it has in the past, and that more can be discussed with four meetings a year rather than just one per year.

Ms. Johnson-Wright questioned page 22 and that frequently complaints were not from consumers, they were from competition. It was agreed that identifying that "consumers" and "competition" was a good breakdown. She questioned if a percentage should be listed.

Regarding Issue number eight - Gary Cooper indicated that it is HHP's position, that the Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau and the Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology Board should be separate, and that HADB should be a statutory board. Gary Cooper explained past thoughts of Sunset Committee regarding merger bills that failed to pass. Ms. Blood stated that the last sentence on page 44 would be stricken from text.

Ms. Johnson-Wright questioned the abilities of the current Committee verses the abilities of a governing Board. Ms. Blood stated the question regarding the merger or changing it to a Board is not an issue for the Bureau to take a position on.

Questions arose about the fees, and noting what the fees were and what they currently are.

It was mentioned that the Sunset Report is very easy to read and easy to follow.

### **Agenda Item IX-Future Advisory Committee Meetings**

The next Advisory Committee meeting is scheduled for October 20, 2006 at the same location.

The CE sub-committee will meet August 25, 2006.

### **Agenda Item X-Public Comments**

No additional comments.

### **Agenda Item XI-Adjournment**

The Advisory Committee meeting adjourned at 2:10 p.m.